

Pam Young  
February 23, 2017  
DDS Cuts

Thank you to the co-chairs, Senator Osten, Senator Formica, and Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Pam Young, and I am a dental hygienist at the DDS office at Uncas on Thames in Norwich.

I am testifying today to urge the committee to reject the cuts that the Governor has proposed to DDS.

Our dental clinic currently provides services to about 1,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities from the North and South regions. We are the only dental staff in the department east of the Connecticut River, however, patients travel from as far north and west as Rocky Hill, Bristol, Waterbury, Chester, and Madisen, to name just a few.

Our dental clinic treats any person within DDS no matter what their living arrangements. We see patients from public group homes, a large portion of private group homes, people living with CCH providers (Community Companion Homes), families or living independently and receiving individual supports.

Our dentist retired in June after 37 years with the department and a replacement has not been hired, although the position is advertised. Recently, I referred a patient out to a local dental clinic for a consultation/treatment on a front tooth. Due to her difficulty swallowing, the patient could not lie flat for treatment. The dentist did a filling but then gave her written documentation that she could not be seen there for future appointments. When our office called to speak to the supervising dentist of the clinic, the dentist reiterated that the dentists are not required to stand to perform dentistry and this patient could not be treated there in the future. I have not sat down to treat a patient in all of my 7 years with the department.

We are the safety net for individuals who have been refused treatment in other dental offices and clinics. We provide specialized care for a special population of patients.

I'm here today to urge you to publicly commit to keeping the dental clinic open. Please agree to pull together stakeholders who would look at ways to expand dental services to the ID/DD community- including those on the waiting list, those who need services not covered under Title 19, those who can't use community dental clinics, and those who are currently on long waiting lists for dental services.

I urge you to disregard the cuts requested in the Governor's budget and work with us going forward to find a way to help us provide the best care to our families.